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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2957  
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 1592  
RUEHZN/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 2958  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5545  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0954  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0701  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0248  
RUEHRO/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 1391  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP// PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1A//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 HANOI 001989

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC  
(PBATES), OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA), AND MED  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCARROLL, ACLEMENTS AND  
CJENNINGS)  
STATE PASS TO USTR (EBRYAN)  
STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTIEGER, EELVANDER AND ABHAT)  
USDA PASS TO APHIS  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID (JMACARTHUR AND MBRADY)  
ROME FOR FAO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [VM](#)  
SUBJECT: VIETNAM - AUGUST 4 AVIAN INFLUENZA REPORT

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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

REF: HANOI 1629 AND PREVIOUS

1. (U) Summary. There have been no new AI outbreaks in humans or poultry, however, Thanh Nien Daily reported on August 3 that a large number of ducks in two flocks have perished in Tay Ninh, a province bordering Cambodia, and tests are being carried out to identify the cause. A Bloomberg News report dated August 3 indicated that test results are also pending on a sick man who apparently handled duck carcasses in Kien Giang Province in the Mekong Delta. On July 20, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Minister of Health signed an Agreement on Health and Medical Sciences Cooperation in Washington, DC. On July 28, the World Bank hosted an AI donor coordination meeting in Hanoi; the meeting echoed lackluster support in recent months from the international donor community to fund the Government of Vietnam's (GVN) "Green Book." The GVN has lifted the ban on chicken rearing but has renewed the ban on duck rearing until February 2007. Smuggling of live poultry across the border of China continues despite efforts by Vietnamese authorities to crack down on this illegal trade. The Vice Minister Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Bui Ba Bong pressed local authorities in the Mekong Delta to finish the second national vaccination campaign before October, 2006 and reiterated to local authorities the importance of reporting AI outbreaks in a timely manner. The GVN plans to submit an

application for the HHS Request for Application (RFA) to develop capacity for rapid detection of, response to and containment of influenza with pandemic potential. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), U.N. Food and Agricultural Program (FAO) and MARD held several working-level meetings to better coordinate support for technical training and activities focusing on behavioral change and communications. The FAO purchased two BioRad Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machines for MARD's Department of Animal Health (DAH) laboratories; the machines replace the Smartcycle machines loaned by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). End Summary.

¶2. (U) As of August 3, 2006:

- No human AI deaths since October 29, 2005
- No human AI cases since November 14, 2005
- No AI outbreaks in poultry since the last reported incident on December 17, 2005 in Cao Bang Province

However, Thanh Nien Daily reported on August 3 that "a large number of ducks in two flocks have perished in Tay Ninh, a Mekong Delta province, and tests have been carried out to find out the cause."

¶3. (SBU) Bloomberg News has picked up a Toui Tre Newspaper report dated August 3 indicating that a 35-year old man was hospitalized in Kien Giang province with bird flu symptoms. He was hospitalized in Kien Giang on July 30th (and if standard protocols are followed, a sample would arrive for testing at the Pasteur Institute within 24 hours with a diagnosis a few days after that). An X-ray of his lungs showed extensive scarring. Family members reported that prior to becoming sick, the individual handled duck carcasses. The Pasteur Institute in HCMC may have results completed by end of the day on August 4. The Mission is following this case and will report any significant developments.

¶4. (SBU) On 20 July, HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt and Minister of HANOI 00001989 002.2 OF 004

Health Madame Tran Thi Trung Chien signed an Agreement on Health and Medical Sciences Cooperation in Washington, DC. Article III of the Agreement addresses cooperation in the development of a "Rapid Response Protocol" to ensure an effective bilateral or multilateral response to contain and extinguish an outbreak of AI with pandemic potential. During the U.S. visit, Minister Chien and her 15-member delegation visited the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, the Food and Drug Administration in Rockville, Maryland, STATE, USAID, the Office of Global AIDS Coordination and HHS.

¶5. (SBU) On July 28, the World Bank hosted an AI donor coordination meeting in Hanoi that mustered only limited attendance from the international donor community. Mr. Laurent Msellati, Rural Sector Coordinator at the World Bank, chaired a discussion with fewer than ten representatives from the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), U.N. Development Program (UNDP), New Zealand AID, and USAID. Mr. Msellati noted that the GVN has been pressing the World Bank for a donor matrix indicating both pledges and actual levels of donor support for AI. He also commented that recent AI outbreaks in neighboring Laos and Thailand have prompted a bit of unease within the GVN, which believes a November outbreak is imminent.

¶6. (SBU) A WHO representative commented that there appears to be no evidence the GVN is using the Green Book (i.e., the Vietnam Integrated Operational Program for Avian and Human Influenza for the period 2006-2010). He stressed the need for the promulgation of a high-level GVN directive to ensure that the GVN is using the Green Book, which was developed by a team of over thirty international experts, as a roadmap for investment planning for avian and human influenza. The World Bank representative indicated that they may be able to reprogram some unused funds into an integrated health/agriculture program, working in the program's ten provinces and possibly expanding to new ones. Meanwhile, the FAO representative mentioned there was need to look at long-term loans for poultry sector restructuring as donor interest to support the development of industrial poultry farms has not been strong. (NOTE:

As limited international donor support for AI shifts towards countries and regions experiencing new and recurring outbreaks, the GVN will need to give priority to putting the Green Book into action over other development assistance programs if they are to maintain vigilance in combating AI, for example, supporting the semiannual national poultry vaccination campaigns. END NOTE)

¶17. (U) Contrary to earlier reporting (reftel), the GVN has lifted the ban on chicken rearing but not on raising ducks. The Director of MARD's Department of Animal Breeding, Mr. Nguyen Dang Vang, was quoted in Toui Tre Newspaper on August 1 saying that duck farming would remain suspended until February 2007 because of the continued threat of bird flu.

¶18. (U) According to a Washington Post investigative report dated July 30, smugglers working under the cover of darkness haul more than 1,500 contraband chickens a day into Lang Son Province, one of six Vietnamese provinces along the Chinese border, violating the strict ban on illegally imported chickens. According to the report, Vietnamese veterinary officials disclosed in April that they had found AI in samples taken from smuggled chickens confiscated in Lang Son during a border raid. Within days of that event, officials in the remote neighboring province of Cao Bang reported the virus in poultry samples taken from three farms on the Chinese border after

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dozens of potentially smuggled chickens started to die. (NOTE: Despite these occurrences, which were reported in the local press and reftels, the GVN continues to maintain an official stance that no AI outbreaks have occurred in poultry since December. END NOTE) Prices fluctuate, but on average, chicken that sells for 30 cents per pound or less in China can fetch a dollar or more in Vietnam. The syndicates running the smuggling rings pay local villagers about 30 cents a bird to haul the contraband along mountain trails that in some cases snake for more than 10 miles, said Lang Son Province Director of Inspections Mr. Nguyen Thang Loi.

¶19. (U) According to a Vietnamese state media report dated July 28, Vice Minister of MARD Bui Ba Bong pressed local authorities in the Mekong Delta to finish the second national vaccination campaign before October, 2006 (NOTE: As previously reported (reftel), GVN sources have described the national poultry vaccination campaign as "seriously lagging behind schedule." END NOTE) The Vice Minister was speaking at a workshop on poultry and waterfowl rearing in Tien Giang Province. In light of recent AI outbreaks in neighboring Laos and Thailand, Vice Minister Bong reiterated to local authorities the importance of reporting AI outbreaks in a timely manner so that higher authorities can quickly mobilize response efforts.

¶10. (SBU) On June 26, HCMC ConGen EconOff met with Mr. Pham Van Minh, Director of Pha An Sinh Foodstuff Processing and Trading Company (PAS Food), in HCMC. The HCMC facility is designed on a variation of the French/Dutch model of slaughterhouses, which has a capacity to process 500 chickens per hour, 5,000 per day, or 150,000 chickens per month. PAS Food's facility in Vung Tau, which is under construction, will soon be able to slaughter 2,000 chickens per hour or 600,000 per month. The company has a unique, vertically integrated system that handles poultry production from breeding farms to product distribution centers. (NOTE: Mr. Minh stated that imported chicken from the U.S. can be competitively priced on local markets, despite higher transportation costs and import duties. PAS Food's has tested the market by selling a ton of imported chicken from the U.S. at a profit. On August 2, Vietnam News reported that chicken pieces imported from the U.S. now account for around 40 percent of the market in HCMC, Vietnam's largest city. END NOTE) The HCMC Department of Animal Health (DAH) regulates health and safety standards on slaughterhouse locations, carcass handling procedures, water treatment facilities and freezing systems. Mr. Minh claimed that DAH staff conduct daily rounds of inspection and quality control.

¶11. (SBU) In discussions between Post's CDC AI Coordinator and interlocutors at the Ministry of Health, the Vietnam Administration of Preventive Medicine (VAPM) (the principal arm of the MOH responsible for routine surveillance, response and implementation of public health programs at district and provincial levels) is taking

the lead in responding to Request for Application CDC-RFA-CI06-607, which seeks a five-year cooperative agreement to develop the capacity for rapid detection of, response, and containment of influenza with pandemic potential. In addition to VAPM, partnering institutions within MOH include the National Institute of Health and Epidemiology, Department of Curative Medicine, and the Department of Information, Education and Communication. Minister Chien has engaged her staff to respond to the Request for Applications (RFA), which can fund activities of USD 1.15 million in the first year, and discussed the proposal during her visit to CDC offices on 17-18 July.

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¶12. (SBU) In a series of meetings facilitated by USAID in June and July, Behavior Change and Communication (BCC) partner Academy for Educational Development (AED) met with several U.N. agencies in a push to ensure AED's BCC messaging is in sync with that of the larger donors. AED met with UNICEF and UNDP and was promised "honorary membership" to the U.N. BCC working group, currently only open to U.N. partners, but which plans to open up to the wider NGO community in the fall.

¶13. (SBU) USAID, FAO and MARD Department of International Cooperation staff also met in July at the Department of Animal Health to review their requests for additional U.S.-based AI-related training. FAO determined that subjects such as pandemic surveillance were already covered by their planned training and that USDA would support epidemiology training. USAID will therefore look at the feasibility of the remainder of the DAH requests.

¶14. (U) The FAO, which receives support from USAID, purchased two BioRad Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machines for DAH laboratories. RT-PCR is a technique for identifying influenza subtypes, of which H5N1 is one of many. These machines will strengthen AI surveillance and control by allowing DAH laboratories to more rapidly and accurately determine if (and what subtype of) AI viruses are present in samples. These machines replace the Smartcycle machines loaned by USDA.

¶15. (U) As reported in local press, CARE International in Vietnam is implementing a USD 8,000 project to raise people's awareness of bird flu control in the Mekong Delta province of An Giang. Under the project ending September 2006, CARE is conducting training courses on bird flu control for medical workers, members of the Farmers' Association and teachers in 16 communes in Cho Moi, Chau Phu, An Phu and Tan Chau Districts. CARE International also financed a project in An Giang Province, which provided almost 56,000 breeding chickens for 60 farming families in Tinh Bien, Cho Moi and An Phu districts. (NOTE: With eight million of Vietnam's 11 million households engaged in backyard poultry production prior to 2003, poor households have been more severely affected by AI outbreaks and mass cullings as they are more dependent on poultry and eggs for both income and food. END NOTE)

Marine